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**Culture of peace**

## Letter dated 13 August 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to forward the Declaration issued by the World Conference on Dialogue, which was convened by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, in Madrid from 16 to 18 July 2008 (see annex). I would appreciate it if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 48.

(*Signed*) Abdullatif H. **Sallam**
Counsellor
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

* A/63/150.

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**Annex to the letter dated 13 August 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

[Original: Arabic, English and French]

# The Madrid Declaration

**Issued by**

## The World Conference on Dialogue

**Organized by**

## the Muslim World League

**in Madrid, Spain**

**Under the Patronage of**

**Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques**

**King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud**

**on 13-15/7/1429H**

**(16-18/7/2008)**

The followers of the world religions and cultures as well as intellectuals and researchers, who took part in the World Conference on Dialogue called by Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, and organized by the Muslim World League (MWL) in Madrid, Spain during 13-15/7/1429H (16-18/7/2008) express their full appreciation to Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, for his patronage and inauguration of the Conference as well as for his speech to the participants which they have considered as one of the main documents of the Conference.

They express their full appreciation to H.M. King Juan Carlos I of Spain for his participation in the Conference with a comprehensive welcome speech and to H.E. Mr. Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, Prime Minister of Spain, for his participation in the inaugural session of the Conference and for his efforts in the dialogue of civilizations, and to the Spanish Government for holding the Conference in Spain, which possesses a historical heritage that belongs to the followers of different religions and has contributed to the human civilization.

They recall the objectives of the Charter of the United Nations, which call for exerting common efforts to strengthen international relations, seek an ideal human society and focus on dialogue as a civilized way of cooperation.

They also recall the 1994 United Nations General Assembly Declaration of Principles, which call for tolerance and the spread of the culture of peace, as well as its consideration of 1995 as the year of tolerance and its declaration of 2001 as the year of dialogue among civilizations.

They acknowledge the Appeal of Makkah issued by the International Islamic Conference for Dialogue, called by Custodian of Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, and organized by the Muslim World League earlier in 2008.

They set out from the agreement among the followers of religions and cultures on the value of dialogue as the ideal way of mutual understanding and cooperation in human relations and peaceful coexistence among the nations.

Hence, they affirm the following principles:

1. Unity of mankind as its origin is one, and equality among human beings irrespective of their colours, ethnic backgrounds and cultures.

2. Human beings suffer from interior division between evil inclination and love for good and justice. With divine help and their active participation, they can dominate what in them is evil and progress on the path of good.

3. Diversity of cultures and civilizations among people is one of the Signs of God and a cause for advancement and prosperity of humanity.

4. The religions aim at realizing that people are obedient to their Creator, and at achieving happiness, justice, security and peace for all mankind. The religions seek to strengthen the ways of mutual understanding and coexistence among people despite the differences of their roots, colours and languages. The religions call for dissemination of virtue with wisdom and politeness and for rejection of extremism and terrorism.

5. Promote respect for religions and their symbols, so avoiding the derision of what people consider sacred.

6. Respecting human dignity, promoting human rights, observing peace, honouring agreements and respecting unique traditions of peoples and their right to security, freedom and self-determination are the basis for building good relations among all people. Achieving this is a major objective of all religions and prominent cultures.

7. The significance of religion and moral values, and the return of human beings to their Creator in confronting crimes, corruption, drugs, and terrorism, and in preserving the family as well as in protecting the societies from deviations.

8. Family is the basis of society and its cornerstone, and its preservation as well as protection from disintegration is essential for any secure and stable society.

9. Dialogue is one of the necessities of life. It is also one of the most important means of mutual understanding, cooperation, exchange of benefits, and realization of the truth, which contributes to the happiness of humankind.

10. The preservation of environment and nature of the earth as well as its protection from pollution and other environmental dangers constitute a basic objective of religions and cultures.

In order to cooperate in realization of the above-mentioned principles through dialogue, the Conference reviewed the process of dialogue and its impediments, keeping in mind, the catastrophes which afflicted humanity in the 20th century, and in view of the fact that terrorism is one of the most serious obstacles in the way of dialogue and coexistence, and that it is a global phenomenon which requires the international efforts to combat it with the spirit of seriousness, responsibility and justice through an agreement that determines the meaning of terrorism, addresses its root causes and achieves justice and stability in the world.

Based on the above, the Conference recommends the following:

1. To reject the theories which call for clash of civilizations and cultures, and warn against the gravity of campaigns that seek to deepen the dispute and destabilize peace and coexistence.

2. To strengthen the common human values, cooperate in disseminating them in the societies and solve the problems which obstruct them.

3. To disseminate the culture of tolerance and mutual understanding through dialogue so that it becomes a framework of international relations by holding conferences and symposiums, as well as by developing cultural, educational and media programmes which lead to it.

4. To agree on the rules of dialogue among the followers of religions and cultures through which noble values and moral principles are consecrated as common values for the followers of religions and cultures in order to strengthen stability and achieve prosperity for human beings.

5. To work on issuing a document by the governmental and non-governmental international organizations that includes the respect of religions and their symbols, as well as the prohibition of their denigration and the incrimination of those who commit such denigration.

To fulfil these objectives of dialogue that the Conference looks forward to achieve, the participants agreed on adopting the following means:

1. Formation of a working team to study the problems that hinder dialogue and come in way of realizing its desired results, and prepare a study that includes visions for solution of these problems.

2. Cooperation among religious, cultural, educational and media institutions to consolidate the moral values, and encourage the noble social practices as well as to confront the sexual promiscuity, family disintegration and other vices.

3. To organize joint conventions and meetings, conduct researches, prepare media programmes, and use the Internet and other information media to disseminate the culture of dialogue, mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence.

4. To incorporate the issues of dialogue among the followers of religions, civilizations and cultures into the educational, cultural, media and youth activities.

5. To call upon the United Nations General Assembly to support the outcome reached by the Conference, and to benefit from it to push the dialogue among the followers of religions, civilizations and cultures by holding a special session on dialogue.

The Conference participants hope that Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, will exert his efforts for holding this session as soon as possible. It will be a pleasure for them to take part in that session through a delegation that represents them and is selected by the Muslim World League.

In their commitment of the principles and concepts which the Conference has agreed upon, the participants stress the need that dialogue remains open and is held periodically.

They have extended their gratitude to the appeal and invitation of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, for this world dialogue. They have also expressed their appreciation to the Muslim World League and other bodies that cooperated with it in organization of this Conference. They have commended the constant efforts of the Muslim World League in areas of dialogue and cooperation among nations and peoples, hoping that common human objectives which mankind looks forward are well accomplished.

**Issued in Madrid**
**15/7/1429H**
**(18/7/2008)**